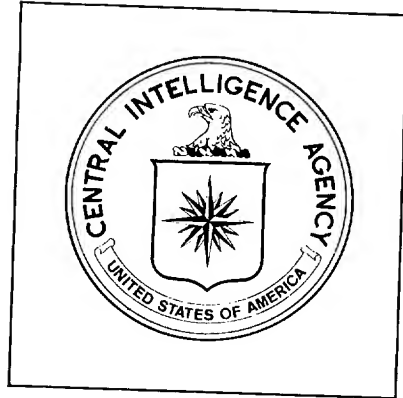


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Middle East Africa South Asia

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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Iran

Air Force Chief Killed

The death of air force chief General Mohammed Khatami in a sporting accident late last week deprives the Shah of an unusually competent military leader and a trusted subordinate. Khatami presided over the modernization of the air force--Iran's elite military arm--and the Shah had counted on him to help guarantee stability and continuity at the time of the Shah's death. General Khatami almost certainly was intended to play a key role in any succession scenario by helping to carry out the Shah's plans, keeping the military in line, and supporting the Shah's heir against challengers.

Khatami's special relationship with the Shah derived from long association and family ties. Khatami was once the Shah's personal pilot and was married to the Shah's half-sister. He served as chief of the air force since 1958. There were rumors that he was slated to be appointed minister of war.

Khatami's deputy, Lieutenant General Tadayon, has been named the new chief of the air force. Tadayon is an elderly staff officer who lacks the vigor to handle the job. He is probably an interim appointee. The Shah's problem will be to find a replacement combining Khatami's unquestioned personal loyalty and his command ability.

The loss of Khatami may stimulate the Shah to take a particularly close look at the reliability of all his major commanders. The ruler's confidence in the ability of his senior officers to carry out his political plans after he departs the scene may have weakened now that Khatami is out of the picture.
(CONFIDENTIAL)



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Afghanistan

Leftist Officers Dropped from Key Jobs

President Daoud has taken further steps to reduce the influence of leftists in his regime. Last month he dismissed several allegedly leftist-oriented officials, including the commander of his palace guard, Major Zia. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Daoud has removed two other majors, both close friends of Zia, from important command assignments. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Daoud has shifted a number of leftist officers away from Kabul in order to make it harder for them to attempt any moves against his government.

Although we have had no reports indicating that Zia and his friends were suspected of plotting against the government, Daoud appears to have grown increasingly distrustful of Afghanistan's leftists in recent months. He has not, however, let these suspicions damage his relations with his Soviet neighbors, on whom Afghanistan has long depended for military and economic aid. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/ NO DISSEM ABROAD/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

[REDACTED]

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